Press Release

For Immediate Release
January 4, 2008

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Sewer System Overflows in Sonoma Valley Area

Sonoma, CA– The Sonoma Valley County Sanitation District reported today that two sanitary sewer system overflows occurred in the Sonoma Valley at locations near Speck Road and Bachman Drive. Personnel have been dispatched to both locations to post cautionary signs, collect water samples for analysis and to take action to control the spills.

Preliminary reports indicated that sewage combined with rainwater was flowing from several sewer collection system manholes in the area. Heavy rainfall in the area earlier today likely contributed to the overflows. Wet weather overflows can occur when rainwater infiltrates into sewer collection system pipes causing flow volumes that exceed the capacity of the system.

The Sonoma Valley County Sanitation District which provides sanitary sewer collection and wastewater treatment services in the Sonoma Valley area is staffed by personnel from the Sonoma County Water Agency.

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Sonoma County Water Agency provides water supply, flood protection and sanitation services for portions of Sonoma and Marin counties. Visit us on the Web at www.sonomacountywater.org.

Update from Paul Siri 10/22/07

California salmon returns are showing a large amount of variability in 2006-07 with generally low numbers in the Central Valley and moderate to low returns on the coast with a few watersheds showing moderate to strong returns. It is too early to make definitive statements across all geographies.

This has been another year of anomalies in the North- Central California ocean food web and some significant events occurring in California and Oregon. Cassin's Auklets, a population of sea birds that roost on the Farallon Islands, have been observed for 30 years. In the past three years these Auklets have experienced low numbers tied to decreasing amounts of krill- the auklets preferred prey and important salmon food. This past year, for the first time, there was reproductive failure for Farallon Island Cassin's auklets.

During the past three years a zone of low oxygen, or hypoxia, has been recorded off Oregon. This year the event became more extreme with anoxic (no oxygen) zones being observed resulting in mortality of fish and invertebrates. Unlike similar observations of "dead zones' in the Gulf of Mexico and the southeastern states the Oregon hypoxia and anoxia events appear to be linked to interactions of biology and physics with low wind events (similar to what is thought to create the low krill numbers) creating stratification in the ocean. This stratification creates results in low oxygen and is exacerbated when rising numbers of fish and invertebrates die and bacteria consumes the remaining oxygen.

Both the drop off in krill and the hypoxia events are linked to changes associated with large scale oscillations in the California Current and Gulf of Alaska systems. It in not known with certainty if these events are directly linked to climate change but there is wide consensus that climate drives these systems and that climate change is likely to create more variability and thus more uncertainty in managing salmon and near shore fisheries.